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that will mellow with time; but it has not the innate strength, the heavy force of the Irish, nor the similar self-assertion of the Spanish; without the mourned past of the Italian and Scotch, it has with its hope of the future no definite wish, no determination; touching the surface lightly, and with little self-control; hoping, but not intending, some undefined blessing; more inclined to play with the present than to go on to the future, it speaks a race-life culminating, but without glory, and without sorrow; its plaintive tones are the sorrow of to-day, mingled with to-day's pleasures; its hope is the reaction of a light heart, between the moments of discontent and *ennui*.

The French music swells, and fades easily; its characteristic is, grace of motion, combined with sweetness of sound, full, with little or no reserve, though some self-control. When plaintive it yearns for the existing, though absent or unattainable; its past is forgotten, its future unheeded; rising and falling with equal grace, but little Æolian swell of the Irish, little Scotch longing regret, but perhaps more of the latter than the former, especially in the airs of Normandy; the airs of Provence should be even lighter, more elastic, more like the Italian; the whole is the voice of a race-life, self-absorbed, *passant*; rich in fancy and feeling, but of less energy than might have been expected.

The Scandinavian, from the huge anthems of "Tordenskiold" and "Nils

Juel" to the "Ung Soëman" and "Kjarlighed med et frit mod," shows much strength, swelling grandly, and falling with a fulness of satisfaction that leaves no room for hope or regret. There seems in this respect to be an element wanting in Scandinavian music that is not lacking in their poetry; but in place of it, perhaps, may be put the falling to a low note, gradually to rise with retarding motion, on the last sound. This, if not a Norwegian peculiarity, is certainly a characteristic. The whole of the Scandinavian music strikes its notes full, without reserve of self-control, and with a long swinging motion. The words *Gamle Norgé* seem to represent the whole scope of music to a Norwegian. In speaking of this Scandinavian music, the Jodle should be excepted; it is the connecting link between Sweden and Switzerland (see F. Bremer's book on "Switzerland"), and belonging to the mountains, is less heard among the travelling part of the nation than the more purely national airs. There is, probably, in Sweden still another music to be found when sought for, having a relationship to that of Central Asia. It should be wilder than the Scandinavian, with more self-control and delicate perception than anything from Mont Blanc to the Maelström, though perhaps showing affinity with the Cossack. Also, in Finland good music should be found, graceful in motion, and with some affinity to the Irish. But data on that, and all countries east of those mentioned are wanting.

#### THE SIXTH ANNUAL EXHIBITION OF THE ARTISTS' FUND SOCIETY.

If any one should mistake this exhibition for an exhibition of American art "of the period," he would be led to seriously misjudge that particular manifestation of humanity. American art, as it now exists, is not to be studied in these

galleries. Different artists have sent hither such different reports about themselves, that no comparative estimate of individuals is possible, and no conclusions can be formed respecting them as a body, or their work as a whole. One painter has

done his best, and sent it; another has done his slightest and hastiest, and sent that. One has hunted among old canvases set face-to-wall about his studio, and selected, finished up, and dispatched the showiest; one has allowed some ill-advised friend to send a piece of his childhood's work, which the ill-advised friend has long had hanging on his dining-room wall; and still another has sent his summer's studies, and trusted to the people who look to rightly estimate their character, as studies, and to judge them from the right point of view.

Obviously, we cannot form any conclusions about the present state of American art. Obviously, we cannot say, because one man is badly represented, that he has fallen off. Obviously, we shall not be able, from anything we see here, to decide for ourselves any of the points that are in doubt. It will not be well to go through the exhibition and discuss in order the works which compose it. It would not be easy to consider one man's elaborate painting and another's rapid sketch, in succession, and yet avoid misleading the reader toward a false relative estimate of the two artists. This is the danger always, but it is a danger that must often be braved, and, if possible, overcome. This exhibition, however, offers too much of the nettle of danger, and too little of the flower of safety. We are more than content to speak of a few pictures which seem to us, from one or another reason, to call for criticism, and, without comparing one to another, to compare each to that standard of excellence by which we think all works of art should be tried.

That standard, so far as the NEW PATH is concerned, remains what it has always been. It has never been lowered;—if it has been raised higher, it is only because the people have grown and we have grown with them, and a higher standard is possible. The standard is

still Truth. Whatever we may have had to say about gracefulness, beauty, invention, and composition; weakness and strength; paleness and glow; awkwardness and skill—has always been subordinate to the other more important consideration of truthfulness. Indeed, these considerations are all contained in that one, truthfulness; for it is truth of composition we have urged, and truth of conception and truth of general effect, no less than the copying of natural forms and hues in detail.

The canons of art do not change. None of the laws of the moral universe are less liable to changes of fashion than they. Forms of error are various, and manifestations of truth are many and different in the world of art; that world is not, in these respects, different from other moral and physical worlds. But the spirit of truth and the spirit of error remain the same, and the changes of form are in a circle, and come constantly back to the starting point. Many of the painters whose works come before the people of New York paint more carefully now than they did when the NEW PATH began its work, more than two years ago. Many of them have gained greater skill, better execution, profounder knowledge. Some have taken the great step from carelessness to care. Nearly all paint more to the purpose every year. The criticism of their work is proportionally difficult. The just comparison in degree of merit between one painter's work and that of another, when both are working well and doing nearly their best, is a very delicate and arduous task. It would be impossible to perform it aright, but for the unvarying and universally applicable standard to which all their work is to be compared—the standard of truth to Nature.

Tried by this standard, the most pretentious works in this exhibition—the biggest and brightest-colored—are found to be not the most valuable. And work

that attracts but few gazers is found to be important. And yet not always so, for there is in truthful work a popular side as well, and an un instructed or not altogether misinstructed public may be trusted to see good in good things, though not, indeed, *all* the good, and perhaps not the greatest good. Mr. Chas. H. Moore's little picture, for instance, No. 192, "Winter Study in the Catskills," seems to be as popular as any picture in the exhibition. Not only do the lookers look, but the talkers also talk and the learned discourse, and nearly all the talk and the discourse is in praise of the charming picture. It is a fortunate work of art, that unites so many suffrages in its favor.

And, tried by the highest standard, how admirable it is! It is the legitimate successor of the picture in the latest exhibition of the National Academy of Design, "Study in the Catskill Valley." There was no doubt possible that that picture was the best the painter could do; it was stamped with the impress of conscientious care and love of truth. This picture was assuredly as carefully painted as that, but could not be more carefully painted; this is not more plainly than that was the fruit of the most loving labor. But this new picture is better than that of last spring, because more truthful; because, that is to say, telling the truth about Nature more adequately and completely. The truth of drawing is perhaps not greater in this than in the former picture. The drawing seemed almost faultless in that one, and, as we look back now to our memory of it, we are not able to say which of the two pictures we should choose the rather to illustrate delicate and subtle truth of drawing, unless the accurate rendering of the lovely forms of the white clouds decide the point in favor of this wintry scene. But in other respects, as, for instance, in color and in gradations of light and shade, this is by far

the better, because the more truthful picture.

There is a truth of strength as well as a truth of delicacy. There is a truth of broad masses as well as a truth of delicate detail. There is a truth of "general effect" and "tone," as well as a truth of local color, or a truth of simple form. It has, indeed, always been our doctrine that delicacy, truth of detail and of local color and simple form are the first things which should engage an artist's attention; because we have always held that true strength comes only out of delicacy, and that truth of broad masses comes only from a profound knowledge of detail, and that truths of general effect and tone follow, and not precede, special and local truths. But the study of these things, which, as we have said, should engage an artist's first attention, must lead an artist to knowledge of and power over all the others, or the study will not have been wholly well directed. And the best proof that could possibly be offered of the inherent force and universal applicability of those principles of art which we have always laid down, is the success of those artists who have resolutely obeyed those principles; their success, not only in painting the minute, delicate, and local truths with which they began, but in painting also the general, broad, and evanescent facts which would seem the farthest from their reach.

Mr. Moore has succeeded in both. That still greater success is to be expected for him hereafter—that he has by no means reached the crown of his art—that he is not an immortal painter yet, no one knows better than we know it. The highest standard of landscape art is not illustrated as yet by the practice of any American painter. But the greater (or rather *more complete*) success which we speak of is, we think, more nearly within his reach than that of any other painter who exhibits in New York, or

Boston, or Philadelphia,—far as it may be yet beyond the reach of all, Mr. Moore included. For in this "Winter Study" there is more accurate perception and more faithful rendering of all the facts of nature taken together, near and far, small and great, distinct and vague, local and general, than in any landscape picture of the past year by any American artist, so far as we know or have seen.

It is in the highest degree hopeful that, as Mr. Moore's work grows more powerful, it becomes not less delicate, but even more minutely truthful in detail. There is an ideal of landscape art which perhaps has never been reached by human work. We have no wish to say or even hint that Mr. Moore is likely to reach that ideal. But it is to the credit of his work that it makes that ideal a little more conceivable. That ideal is the *perfect* union of detail and general effect. Let us illustrate our meaning. We have often seen attempts, well intended, meritorious, powerful, to show together, on one canvass, foliage and herbage in the near foreground and on a large scale, and distant forest and mountain. We have never seen the attempt succeed. The imaginable better thing is not vague or a dream, but is very positive, and always seems not impossible to realize,—that is, to paint. The ideal of landscape is not the submitting of special truths to general truths, but the full realization of all the truths in perfect harmony with each other. The ideal of landscape is not a correcting of nature, but a stopping short of the whole truth of nature, just so far as is made necessary by the physical limitations of art, and a stopping short in the best (*i. e.*, the least injurious) way. This ideal is, so far as we know, yet to be reached. It will not be reached, probably, in a time when art is nothing to the mass of the people, and to the connoisseurs little else than a

subject for talk and dispute. It will not be reached until the time shall come when affectation shall be very much less common than now, and love of nature much more general; not until most of the artists are working properly, and most of the people interested in their work, and most of the critics doing what they can to help both artists and people. Therefore, we do not hope that Mr. Moore will reach it, even in those moments when his picture seems the fairest and his way of work the most satisfying. We thank his picture that it makes the attainment of the ideal seem not so far in the future as it would seem without it.

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We heartily admire Mr. Thos. C. Farrer's picture, No. 279, "Northampton," and yet it is, to us, rather a disappointment than a delight. It does not seem to us to be hopeful. All that there has been good in Mr. Farrer's landscapes of the last three years, is bettered in this, but much that has been deficient or faulty is as bad or worse than ever. We cannot but feel, we repeat, less hopeful of Mr. Farrer's future as a landscape painter, than we felt before seeing this last, most powerful, most impressive of the pictures he has exhibited.

An artist generally has it in his own power to bring to nought the prognostications of his critics, both for good or evil. It is foolish to prophesy very positively concerning the future of a man's life and works, because there are two elements that will go to make up that future, the natural talent of the man, which the critic may be able to judge, and his power of work, which last, though we have called it an *element*, is really compound, being made up of will, nervous energy, physical health, and circumstances, and which, therefore, he cannot judge. So that when a critic says that a picture is hopeful or not hopeful, he means, or

should mean, that it is itself promising or not promising; he should not mean to predicate too positively the future of the painter he criticizes.

There is much of Mr. Farrer's picture that is better than ever before—and that is hopeful. There is much of it that is no improvement on past work of his, even on work long past, and that is not hopeful. This year's exhibitions will not decide, and next year's exhibitions may not decide whether the omens of good or the omens of ill will prevail.

What a lovely sky! Distant, serene, and pure, with white summer clouds, which slowly rise from the horizon, and begin their solemn march across its blue breadth. From one point behind the green hill, which seems to be Mount Holyoke, the clouds have come into sight, scarcely above the horizon; they separate, and begin their course by three different principal routes, radiating like a fan. It is very beautiful. And it is very true to Nature. It is not once nor twice, but many times in the course of every summer that those clouds fan out from their starting-point on the horizon, and spread across the sky. The belt of lower cloud in the centre of the picture seems to us not less truthful in intention, but less successfully painted. On the other hand, the bank of mist which lies along the distant hills in front of the spectator, and just beneath the belt of cloud we last spoke of, is wonderfully perfect in effect.

The whole distance is charming. Mount Holyoke, on the right hand, takes off the eye from much more brilliant color in the foreground fields. The distant armies of forest, that seem to extend their lines away to the mountain, where their strongest point is and their most compact array, are as truthful as the sky, and are less beautiful only than it.

And between the forests and the spectator the rich Northampton Meadows with great elms dotted over them like skirmishers, stretch from the uplands to the banks of the smooth Connecticut, rich with varied color, and broken by spots of shade.

It seems to have been the attempt to get general truth of effect, in this picture, that has injured it, and made the foreground so very faulty as it is. The distance is distant and yet brilliant, and the middle distance is made to glow with color;—but at a heavy cost. Exaggerated depth of shadow, giving gloom which is actual blackness in many places, and that at a distance of many hundred yards from the spectator, where Nature's shadows are shadowy, indeed, but are not black; clumps of trees in middle distance, in which there is nothing like foliage or growth or lightness or ramification, but heavy, spungy masses of vigorous green; isolated trees, which are in no way individual in character, but stand about in scores, all alike, radiating brush strokes below and spungy masses above; nearer trees in foreground, which are absolutely conventional, and as like copies from Harding's drawing book as a practised out-of-door workman could make them:—are the worst of the separate evils which make up the unsuccessful, unbeautiful, untruthful foreground.

Not foolish or meaningless work, observe. Work that would not be possible to any but an able and a practised painter, but untrue, untrue to Nature, both in detail and *a fortiori* in general effect. A going astray not to be accounted for except, perhaps, by the comparison with this of much other work contemporary with it, which this exhibition does not afford us the opportunity to make.